

Claims

What is claimed is:

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1. A method for managing an emergency assistance system including interaction between an operator a vendor and a customer, the method comprising:
 - (a) receiving incident information from the operator and storing the incident information in an incident tracking file;
 - (b) receiving first invoice information from the vendor; and
 - (c) verifying the first invoice information and generating a bill for the customer.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of generating a report from at least the incident information.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the incident information is received from the operator.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of searching for and selecting the vendor using the incident information and recording any vendor contact information, the vendor contact information becoming a part of the incident tracking file.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of automatically creating at least a portion of the incident information, wherein the automatically created incident information originates from previously entered incident information.
6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of automatically generating at least a portion of a work authorization file, the work

authorization file comprising second invoice information and at least a portion of the incident information.

5 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the step of verifying the first invoice information further comprises comparing the first invoice information to the second invoice information.

10 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of verifying the first invoice information further comprises the step of electronically directing the vendor to an advisor when a discrepancy exists.

 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the incident information originates at least in part from an incident notification call.

15 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of searching for specific incident information.

20 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of verifying the first invoice information and generating a bill further comprises electronically routing the verified invoice information to an accounts payable system.

25 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of verifying the first invoice information and generating a bill further comprises transmitting the bill to the customer.

 13. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of recording and storing load swap information.

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14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of automatically generating at least a portion of the load swap information from previously received and stored information.
- 5 15. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of recording and storing any communication between a user and an external entity.
16. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of recording and storing any communication further comprises creating a phone log and storing the communication in the phone log.
- 10 17. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of creating an automatic reminder to be displayed at a designated time.
- 15 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the automatic reminder is automatically displayed at the designated time.
19. A method for managing a roadside assistance system providing interaction assistance among an operator, a vendor, and a customer, the method comprising:
- 20 (a) receiving incident information from the operator and selecting the vendor from a database, the selecting step being based on the incident information;
- (b) contacting the vendor to provide the vendor with at least a portion of the incident information and obtain vendor information;
- 25 (c) generating a work authorization based at least in part on the incident information and the vendor information, wherein

the incident information is automatically transferred to the work authorization;

- (d) receiving invoice information from the vendor and automatically verifying the invoice information with respect to the incident information, and transmitting the invoice information to an external site; and
- (e) generating a bill based on the invoice and incident information and transmitting the bill to the customer.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of generating a report, the report comprising roadside assistance information.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the roadside assistance information comprises at least a portion of the incident information.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the roadside assistance information comprises at least a portion of the invoice information.

23. The method of claim 20, wherein the report is automatically generated.

24. The method of claim 20, wherein the report is generated by request.

25. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of searching the incident information for specific incident information.

26. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of selecting a vendor further comprises searching for the vendor.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the step of searching for the vendor further comprises searching by a city/state limitation.

5 28. The method of claim 26, wherein the step of searching for the vendor further comprises searching by a location and radius limitation.

29. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of recording and storing load swap information, wherein at least a portion of the load swap
10 information is automatically generated from at least a portion of the incident information.

30. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of recording and storing any communication related to the incident information.
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31. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of accessing customer parameter information, wherein the customer parameter information establishes parameters for at least some discretionary incident decisions.

20 32. The method of claim 31, further comprising the step of updating the customer parameter information.

33. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of accessing asset information, wherein the asset information provides specific information
25 regarding any involved equipment.

34. The method of claim 33, further comprising the step of updating the asset information.

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- 35. The method of claim 19, wherein the automatic verification is accomplished by comparison of the invoice information with the incident information.
- 5 36. The method of claim 19, wherein the invoice information is received via the Internet.
- 37. The method of claim 19, wherein the invoice information is received via telephone.
- 10 38. The method of claim 19, wherein the invoice information is received via mail and inputted by an internal user.
- 39. The method of claim 19, wherein the external site is an external payment system.
- 15 40. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of transmitting the invoice information to an external site further comprises the step of generating a payment instrument, wherein the external site is the vendor.
- 20 41. The method of claim 19, wherein the bill is automatically generated.
- 42. The method of claim 19, wherein the bill is generated by request.
- 25 43. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of generating a bill includes reviewing and finalizing the bill.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein the step of reviewing and finalizing the bill includes electronically generating and examining a bill detail file and a bill summary file.

5 45. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of creating an automatic reminder to be displayed at a designated time.

46. The method of claim 45, wherein the automatic reminder is automatically displayed at the designated time.

10 47. The method of claim 46, wherein the automatic reminder is displayed for a user.

15 48. An automated system for emergency assistance, the system comprising:

- (a) at least one client;
- (b) a server comprising memory, a processor, an incident database, and an invoice database, wherein the processor contains at least one program to perform the following acts:
 - 20 (i) receiving incident information, storing the incident information in the incident database, and tracking the incident information,
 - (ii) automatically creating at least a portion of the incident information, wherein the automatically created incident information originates from previously entered incident information,
 - 25 (iii) receiving invoice information from an external source, storing the invoice information in the invoice database, automatically verifying the

- invoice information, and transmitting the invoice information to a first external site,
- (iv) generating and transmitting a bill to a second external site, wherein the bill is generated from the invoice information and a portion of the incident information, and
- (v) generating a report, the report comprising stored information; and
- (c) a communication path electronically linking the at least one client to the server.

49. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the stored information comprises at least a portion of the incident information.

50. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the stored information comprises at least a portion of the invoice information.

51. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the first external site is an external payment system.

52. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the act of transmitting the invoice information to a first external site further comprises the act of generating a payment instrument, wherein the first external site is a vendor.

53. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the second external site is an external billing system.

54. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the second external site is a customer.

55. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the report is automatically generated.

5 56. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the report is generated by request.

10 57. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the bill is automatically generated.

15 58. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the bill is generated by request.

20 59. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the act of automatically verifying the invoice information is accomplished by comparison with the work authorization information.

25 60. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the external source is an external user.

61. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the external user is a vendor.

62. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the communication path is an Internet-based electronic network.

63. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the communication path is a telephone.

64. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the communication path is accessed by an internal user.

5 65. The automated system of claim 48, wherein the communication path is accessed by an external user.

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